

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**REGULAR MEETING****Monday, August 14, 2000**

Present: June Bailey, James Johnston, Joe McLeland, M.S. Mitchell, Trix Niernberger, Leon Robinson and William Sanders

Also Present: Debra Foster and David Foster – Jones – Rice – Foster, PA; Tim Austin – Austin Miller, PA; and Doug Kupper, Larry Hoetmer, and Maryann Crockett (Staff)

President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:33 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 10, 2000, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) land purchases in flood zones along the Cowskin and Calfskin Creeks.** President Mitchell mentioned the difficulty in maintaining small park sites such as the lots located in the floodplain. Director Kupper referred board members to the aerial photographs provided with the agenda. He said the Park and Recreation Department has been asked to provide input on how the properties could be utilized. He explained that some of the properties had already been purchased and that some were still being negotiated. He commented on the possibility of the properties located at Lynndale and Wetmore being used as access points to a wildlife corridor and/or future nature trail. He also mentioned that the property at 119th St. could be used in conjunction with the Meadows Park. He said staff would conduct a site analysis on each property and provide that information to the Board for future discussion.

There was general discussion concerning size of the lots and total acreage, the number of homes involved (approximately fifteen), and funding for property acquisition. Director Kupper explained that FEMA would purchase the properties for park and open space use only. He briefly reviewed FEMA regulations concerning property acquisition in flood zones.

2. **Lincoln Park – Firefighter's Memorial.** Larry Hoetmer, Landscape Architect, reviewed the item referring board members to the park site plan. He reported that the Lincoln Park water feature plaza was currently under construction. He said an old fire station at the corner of Bayley and Broadway was being converted into a Firefighter's Museum. He said as part of the renovation, the Park and Recreation Department had agreed to provide an area in the park for a memorial for firefighters who died in the line of duty. He said all costs associated with construction of the memorial would be funded through private donations.

Hoetmer stated that the idea was to design a plaza at the South end of the fire station for construction of the memorial, three flag poles and an area for temporary seating for memorial services. He briefly described the memorial, which was a double-sided wall with the names of all Wichita firefighters who died in the line of duty on one side. He also mentioned other plaza features including the use of brick and/or concrete pavers and the inclusion of a sculpture at the site.

Bailey asked if the neighborhood association had been notified. Hoetmer explained that the neighborhood association had not yet seen the memorial sketch, however, they were aware that some type of firefighter memorial had been planned at the park and had no objection.

3. **Update on Needs Assessment Study – Brooks, Chapin and Garvey sites.** Debra Foster and David Foster – Jones – Rice – Foster, PA. David Foster began the presentation by stating that Jones – Rice – Foster had been hired to complete a needs assessment study on three park sites; namely, Brooks, Chapin and Garvey. Debra Foster said they began the process by conducting meetings with user groups, neighbors, the general public and City staff to gather information and input. She said the process was to produce concepts and budgets for future development of the areas that were realistic and politically and financially feasible. She said study goals established were to: provide safe, secure, pleasant, and healthy surroundings for the enjoyment of leisure time; be accessible to all residents; be developed in such a way as to preserve the natural resources; help fulfill unmet needs of the Park system as a whole; be designed for efficient maintenance and low operations costs; accommodate user groups currently not adequately served by the parks system; and design each site to complement each other, yet serve its own constituencies.

Foster continued by saying that some of the expectations and issues involved with park design concepts included environmental constraints, safety, parking and neighborhood impact, exploring compatible uses, opportunities for kids, staffing and more communication between the City, County and surrounding communities.

Foster referred board members to maps of each site and briefly reviewed the best potential uses for each. She said because of its previous use as a landfill and due to the fact that a gas plant will remain on the site for at least thirty years, Brooks (270 acres) had limited development potential. She said some suggestions included radio controlled model airplanes and gliders, ski runs and trails, horse trails, dog park, wildlife observation and other passive uses, climbing wall and river access. She commented that it would also benefit park development to have a buffer around the site, which would include some of the land currently being referred to as the Kingsbury site. She said the site had a beautiful marsh wildlife area and that the view from the top of the hill was spectacular. She added that the Brooks site had the potential of becoming a regional park that would serve all Sedgwick County residents.

Foster said Chapin (190 acres), another previous landfill area, had potential problems due to leakage. She said remediation of that problem was currently being addressed. She said the Wichita radio control club (model airplanes) currently used the area. She said some suggested uses included horse trails, radio controlled model airplanes, dog park, disc golf, mountain biking, bike trail access and river access for non-motorized craft. She said the site had a lovely sand dune area. She said adding another access point to the park for vehicular traffic was also being discussed along with the idea of the addition of some type of public art.

Foster said Garvey (35 acres), which was located close to Chapin, had potential uses such as a kid-designed playground, bike trail access, river education and access, community building or shelter, nature education and other open space uses. She said changing access to the park and parking were sensitive issues, since the site was located in a neighborhood area that must be traversed to get to the park. She said neighbors had also requested inclusion of a community building or shelter for use by seniors and the other community members in the surrounding neighborhood.

Mitchell asked if use of the Greiffenstein school had been explored with the Garvey site as a potential community building. He said there had been previous discussions regarding combined building use and didn't want to see the opportunity overlooked. Director Kupper explained that the school board was still in the process of deciding where to build and replace and/or repair school sites and that the issue was not really part of the scope of the needs assessment study. Mitchell requested that once the needs assessment was completed, he be provided a report on the possibility of combined building use at the site.

4. **Discussion of Kingsbury Site.** On motion by Mitchell, second by Johnston, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to defer this item and take it up as the last item on the agenda under executive session.
5. **Tree Pruning Ordinance.** Director Kupper referred board members to copies of the agenda report, proposed ordinance and City Council Proceedings dated 8/8/00 regarding this item. He stated that the ordinance not only covered tree pruning issues, but also root damage from construction of sidewalks, etc., which will give the City greater control of the City's tree canopy from both above and below.

Bailey asked several questions relative to the appeal process and whether special Board meetings will need to be held to accommodate appeals. Director Kupper said it was at the discretion of the Board, that special meetings may be called if necessary. He added that any decision could be appealed to the City Council and that the Council's decision was final. He reminded the Board that on the City's Tree USA Charter, the Board of Park Commissioners was the governing board for the City's tree canopy.

6. **Request to Designate the Third Street Drainage Project as a Greenway.** Director Kupper referred board members to correspondence from the Uptown Neighborhood Association and Greenways Commission attached to the agenda. He stated that the area was already functioning as a "greenway" although it was being maintained by another City department and was being referred to as the Third Street Drainage Project. After brief discussion, it was the general consensus of the Board to take no action on this item.

OLD BUSINESS

Director Kupper referred board members to a copy of the City Council Proceedings dated 7/18/00 re: Former Arts and Crafts Center Property, 25th and Arkansas – Request from Coalitions Committee to Reconstruct Facility and an article from the 7/19/00 *Wichita Eagle* entitled "City to repair, not rebuild, old arts and crafts center" attached to the agenda. He briefly reviewed the item stating that City staff has met with the coalitions group twice to discuss facility layout. He said once that has been completed the architect, Randal Steiner, will be able to finalize the design and cost estimates. He said the original figure was \$560,00, but that may change depending on the new reconfiguration. He commented that the City will fund one-third of the cost of building renovation with the other agencies; namely, SER, Head Start and ACTS, funding the remaining two-thirds. He concluded by saying that the City Council has already authorized \$75,000 for parking lot, roof and plumbing repair to make the building functional.

OFF AGENDA ITEM

On motion by Bailey, second by Johnston, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the rules be set aside and that an item be taken up off the agenda concerning the Northeast bicycle path.

Bailey reported that she had spoken with Willie Burton from the Matlock Heights Neighborhood Association and that there seemed to be some confusion concerning exactly what had been approved and funded on the Northeast bicycle path project. She said it had been reported at a meeting on Grove Park that the bicycle path concept had been “axed”.

Director Kupper explained that when the City applied for Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) funding, the Northeast bicycle path was one of the projects that did not receive funding. However, he said when the City reapplies for funding next year, the project will be included in the application. Bailey commented that most people thought the project had already been funded.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Financial Report for May, 2000.
- Article from the 7/15/00 *Wichita Eagle* entitled “Endorsements”.
- Article from the 7/23/00 *Wichita Eagle* entitled “North Wichita cruisers crowd Shelton Street”.
- Articles from the August, 2000 edition of *American City & County* entitled “Tips on passing a bond referendum” and “Blazing America’s new coast-to-coast trail”.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by McLeland, second by Johnston, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board of Park Commissioners recess into executive session concerning the relationship between the Brooks Tract and the acquisition of Kingsbury for park purposes and that the Board return from executive session in thirty minutes. The motion for executive session was made for discussions relating to the acquisition of land.

The Board recessed at approximately 4:50 p.m. and returned at 5:20 p.m.

On motion by Johnston, second by Niernberger, IT WAS VOTED to recommend that the City retain ownership of the Kingsbury property as an acquisition for park purposes subject to the reservation for sand production. The motion was further amended to request that revenue from sand production be used to develop the property as a park site. Motion passed 5-2. No – Sanders and McLeland.

Note: Refer to Special Meeting of August 18, 2000, wherein action taken after executive session was reconsidered.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30.m.

M.S. Mitchell, President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk